

## Books by coneygoil

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** El loves to read, F/M, Fluff

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler

**Relationships:** Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler

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**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 720

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

El discovers a love for books.

## Books

Reading was not a privilege Eleven was given in the lab. Though she was taught simple words to read and write, her education was limited for a reason. There would be no distractions from her purpose; no temptation to fantasize beyond the walls of her sterile prison.

Once, a lab worker slipped her a book. In whispered confidence, he explained how much his daughter loved this book and told Eleven to hide it under her mattress when she wasn't reading it. A week later, that generous lab worker disappeared and the book was taken away, Papa's harsh reprimands of engaging in the frivolous activity echoing long after he left her room.

But that one week had opened a door to places Eleven had never been allowed to explore.

When things settled down after she returned from the Upside Down, one of El's requests was to learn to read better. Mike, of course, volunteered instantly and threw his whole heart into teaching her how to sound out words and how to use words in sentences. Mike was prone to detail and his teaching of words reflected that.

But it was Will, who also volunteered, that helped her to just read. He'd sit quietly with her in Castle Byers, both huddled together over a book across their laps. They'd started off with Golden Books; cute little stories that delighted El. She recognized characters from television and became acquainted with new ones. Then she worked her way to longer stories that contained more words than pictures.

Her and Will could sit for hours in his little hide-a-way reading book after book. El soaked in every story, keeping them tucked into a bookcase close to her heart. With every new story brought exciting adventures, far off places, and experiences El never knew existed.

One of the best days for El was when the boys introduced her to the library. They made sure she walked in last, so all four of them could see the expression on her face. Her eyes widened and mouth gaped at the rows of books that seemed to stretch on for a mile. Mike and Will helped her apply for a library card. The yellow rectangle piece of

paper didn't make much sense to El, but she was told it was her key to borrowing any book she desired and that alone determined how safe she would keep that little yellow card.

When she finally felt confidence enough to read longer books on her own, El could be found lying on her tummy on the couch in the Wheeler's basement, a book cracked open in her hands. The sounds of the boys' voices while they played through a campaign was welcomed background noise while El journeyed through her own imagined enchanted forest or solving a mystery with Nancy Drew.

El smiles as the couch sinks down beside her and a hand rest on the small of her back, the echoing footsteps of the boys paddling up the basement stairs. "Started a new book today?" She closes the book for Mike to see, her finger marking the page she's on. "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe," he reads with a nod of his head. "That's a good book, but I prefer The Hobbit. It has a lot more action."

"I'll get to that one soon," El assures. Her trips to the library had inspired her to create a reading list that covered the back and front of a page in her notebook.

"We're going on a food run," Mike thumbed toward the stairs, "want anything?"

"Soda, please."

"Got it." Mike hops up, but pauses. He glances over to where his friends had retreated to then determining it's safe, he leans down planting a kiss on El's forehead.

The little butterflies that flutter when Mike sneaks a tiny morsel of affection invade her chest, and she watches him until his shoes disappear up the stairs. She returns to Narnia, eager to see what happens as Lucy and Mr. Tumnus race back to the lamppost.

The familiar bickering of the boys flows back into the basement, El's anchor to the life she lives. She loves the adventures books take her on, but the greatest adventure is bike rides through town, dramatic scenes acted out in a basement, and freckles on blushing cheeks.